

RESOURCE PROTECTION

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

GULF OF THE FARALLONES NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

PROGRAM STATEMENT

As directed by the National Marine Sanctuary Act, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary's (GFNMS) role is protection of the area's natural resource and ecosystem values by protecting the biodiversity, productivity and aesthetic qualities of the marine environment of the sanctuary through ecosystem-based management.

There are many successful ecosystem-based management models for the terrestrial environment, but these models don't translate well in a fluid, three-dimensional marine environment which functions under a different spatial and temporal scale. As the sanctuary builds and implements this new management plan, the staff will continue to work with other agencies, stakeholders and NOAA to build a more solid model for marine ecosystem management.

OUR GOAL

To protect, and where appropriate, restore and enhance natural habitats, populations, and ecological processes in the sanctuary, through innovative, coordinated, and community-based measures and techniques.



Photo: Jeff Foott

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The goals and objectives set forth by the NMSA direct each sanctuary to take an ecosystem approach to management. GFNMS is developing a resource protection program to provide oversight in addressing current resource protection issues, as well as anticipate and plan for new and emerging issues.

Throughout the public scoping process and the entire management plan review, the public and Sanctuary Advisory Council expressed a deep and abiding concern for better, overall resource protection through the use of conservation-based management tools. The suggestions were wide and varied, including the use of: ecosystem management; the precautionary approach; adaptive management; and managing for sustainability. The sanctuary staff examined both the theory and practice of applying different, conservation-based management tools to the building of the framework for this management plan. These management tools all add greater value to resource protection. Thus, where possible, GFNMS has incorporated these management principles to strengthen the sanctuary's management plan.

*For more information on Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary please visit our website
<http://farallones.noaa.gov>*

THE JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW (JMPR)

Resource Protection is one of the action plans in the GFNMS Draft Management Plan (DMP). The DMP includes nine action plans that, once finalized, will guide sanctuary management for the next five years. The plan is a revision of the original management plan, developed when the sanctuary was designated in 1981, and is focused on how best to understand and protect the sanctuary's resources. The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSPP) is updating the management plans for Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries in what is known as the Joint Management Plan Review.



GULF OF THE FARALLONES NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Designated in 1981, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary spans 1,279-square-miles (966 square nautical miles) just north and west of San Francisco Bay, and protects open ocean, near-shore tidal flats, rocky intertidal areas, wetlands, subtidal reefs, and coastal beaches within its boundaries.

Food-rich sanctuary waters teem with life: fish, invertebrates, seabirds and marine mammals thrive here. The sanctuary contains thirty-six marine mammal species, as well as twenty-six federally listed endangered or threatened species. White sharks and endangered blue and humpback whales migrate here seasonally to feed, and the Farallon Islands host the largest concentration of breeding seabirds in the contiguous United States.



ACTION PLAN

The sanctuary's Resource Protection Action Plan was developed jointly with a variety of stakeholders and partners and includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Establish a framework for identifying, tracking, and addressing new and emerging issues on a timely basis.
- Develop a coordinated communication system among all national marine sanctuaries and other resource management agencies to stay informed about new and emerging issues, share information, and provide a forum for exchange and policy discussion.
- As sanctuary priorities shift, due to both availability of resources and priority of resource management issues, all current, new, and emerging issues need to be continually tracked and re-evaluated.
- Develop a formalized program to consistently and continuously review and evaluate effectiveness of sanctuary regulations.
- Develop a formalized permit program as a mechanism to review and evaluate requests to conduct regulated activities within the sanctuary.
- Increase compliance with sanctuary regulations and other applicable state and federal statutes.
- Review and revise the sanctuary's emergency response plan.
- Develop a framework for identifying and analyzing boundary alternatives.
- Evaluate condition of the radioactive waste dump, and its actual impact on sanctuary resources.
- In cooperation and coordination with the other nine local, state and federal agencies, develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the protection of water quality, natural resources and safety in Tomales Bay.

TO GET INVOLVED

GFNMS welcomes your ideas about important resource management issues in the sanctuary. A Draft Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement are scheduled for release to the public in 2006. Following their release, hearings will be held in several locations throughout the region to gather public comment. Written comments will be accepted as well. To find out about public hearings, or how to submit written comments, please visit our website at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan>.